



heart on your sleeve

Art
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P65
H43
2000



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Curated by Kylie Johnson

**Chris Chapman
David Michael Clarke
Julie Gough
Michael Harrison
Alex Lloyd
David Rosetzky**

Pilmsoll Gallery
Tasmanian School of Art at Hobart
University of Tasmania

12 August - 3 September 2000

I like watching people try on clothes in shops where the mirror is just outside the change rooms. I like watching people in clubs when they hear their 'all-time' favourite song come on and they fling themselves onto the dance floor, dancing like mad - the sideways glances from strangers and the grins from friends. I like spending time in bars where I can talk with people, drink and listen to them tell me things they think I should know - how they once met Tom Rowlands of *The Chemical Brothers* in a supermarket in Hammersmith, that their favourite possession is a pair of Versace boots and how they wish they could have sex more often. There is something attractive about these seemingly random moments. They bring basic issues of identity and self-presentation to the surface.

The idea that a true singular self exists somewhere beneath a myriad of layers is somewhat out of fashion. Tracey Emin, Douglas Gordon, Georgina Starr and Gillian Wearing are amongst the bright young things of contemporary British art to present identity as inherently multiple and fluid, defined for us as much by others as by ourselves. This idea is explored through quite disparate means but often with an emphasis on the autobiographical. On the back of such block buster shows as *Brilliant! New Art From London*¹, *Pictura Britannica: Art From Britain*², and *Sensation: Young British Artists From The Saatchi Collection*³, Britain is widely touted as the centre of this work. After all this is where Tracey Emin sewed the names of all the

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1 *Brilliant! New Art From London* (Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA, 1995), touring.

2 *Pictura Britannica: Art From Britain* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia, 1997), touring.

3 *Sensation: Young British Artists From The Saatchi Collection* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK, 1997), touring. Australian leg cancelled.

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4 *Everyone I Slept with 1963 - 1995*. Using bright bits of fabric, Tracey Emin sewed the names of all the people she could remember sleeping with during this period onto the inside of a dome tent. Originally exhibited in *Brilliant!* *New Art From London*, this work quickly became controversial although the title does not blatantly state that she 'actually' had sex with the people implicated.

5 *Dancing in Peckham*. Gillian Wearing 1994. Video 25 mins., colour, silent. To all appearances Wearing is 'out of it', dancing alone in Peckham shopping mall with a walkman providing her secret soundtrack. A personal moment made public. At first passers-by seem to display an awkward mix of amusement, even embarrassment but as time progresses perhaps they, like me, become envious of someone who appears to have given in to her urges, ignoring public humiliation and stepping outside social constraints.

6 During the 1980's art practice and theoretical debate was dominated by the alienating intellectualism associated with Post-Structuralism. This was to the detriment of the personal.

people she slept with between 1963 and 1995 into the inside of a dome tent⁴, and Gillian Wearing filmed herself dancing alone in Peckham shopping mall to the secret sounds of her walkman⁵. The brash DIY attitudes that accompany this work can perhaps be seen as both a reaction against the dominating analytical theories of the 1980s⁶, and the earlier Abstract Expressionist quest to reveal an inner human essence.

Heart On Your Sleeve has emerged out of a personal interest in work which explores the slippage between the private and the public, the social and the personal, fact and fiction. In the work of Chris Chapman, David Michael Clarke, Julie Gough, Michael Harrison, Alex Lloyd and David Rosetzky the 'stuff' of everyday life - relationships, memories, music, television, film and the popular press - has been utilised as raw material.

In varying degrees the work in *Heart On Your Sleeve* stems from direct experience. Experiences are tested in the diaristic images of Michael Harrison. Often sparse in execution, they are worked and re-worked over months, sometimes years - a method of on-going experimentation which seems to echo the process of forming an image of one's place in the world. An image revised by time. They appear as glimpses into mental spaces - careful not to give 'too' much away while simultaneously acting as a record of personal events and thoughts.

Like Harrison, Julie Gough's installations grapple with memory and time. Operating not unlike test strips, they are 'slices' of her personal memories activated by actual objects - bricks, abalone shells and a bronze plaque⁷, etc. Experiences are fleeting and memories shift ceaselessly between the real and the imagined. It is this unsteady ground that compels Gough to enter hospitals long since abandoned in the hope of supplementing an unstable memory, of searching through second hand shops hoping to come across something that may fill in a gap and revisiting hardware shops on a quest to buy yet another sample pot of what may this time be 'the right' green paint. The reading of this personal 'multiple choice puzzle' is confined only by the individual viewer's experience of it, fixed in the broader context of his or her life.

In the same way that a familiar smell can trigger past memories and emotions, almost against one's will, so does the pop song. Pop songs tend to frame significant experiences in life. David Michael Clarke's two monitor work *In Between Days* utilises two Elvis Presley songs. The optimistic feel of *I Just Can't Help Believing*, is the soundtrack for a relationship in it's infancy - in the throws of passion and *I'm Left, You're Right, She's Gone*, accompanies the after effects of a break-up. Personal relationships are Clarke's subject matter⁸, and in this instance he has filmed his real girlfriend and his real bedroom set to nostalgic Elvis tunes. Although these

7- From correspondence with Julie Gough on her work, *how they got here*. 'I found this old plaque in a storeroom - it is a temporary loan. What has held me is the wording - firstly that it is headed DORSET. This is what the marauding English renamed my tribal territory, the country of my ancestors - the Trawlwoolway people of the far North East of Tasmania. People from Dorset, England were threatened with Transportation for Life for 'injuring' the Dorset bridge which this plaque belonged to, yet unaccountably it was removed and transported here. I think that this two piece work is partially my consideration of the plethora of reconciliation bridge walks sweeping the 'nation'.

8- At the end of performing one of his rapid slide presentations to an intimate gathering at the University of Glasgow in 1998, Clarke played a song by the band *Orange Juice*. He prefaced this by stating that this is the song that he sings to himself when he breaks up with a girlfriend.

tunes may not hold any specific nostalgia for those of Clarke's generation they are used here to propose the idea and create a mood rather than trigger individual memories.

People acting out their 'real lives' for the camera may be weird but it is not new. Surely Aussie soap opera icons Charlene (Kylie Minogue) and Scott (Jason Donovan) were acutely aware of this oddness every time they kissed on or off camera. The sense of construction and viewer manipulation in Clarke's videos sit alongside moments of apparent sincerity. Perhaps it is the fact that neither Clarke nor his girlfriend are professional actors that allows the 'stagedness' of it all to slip. But I suspect however, that it is more to do with a desire not to be too pent-up about it all. The things that just happen are often the most significant aspect of this way of working. The framing, editing and imposition of a soundtrack suggest a desire to neatly package emotions in order to try and make some kind of sense of them. What Clarke has achieved by doing this is to emphasise the futility of this desire.

Unlike Clarke, David Rosetzky probably wouldn't even entertain the idea of letting the 'façade' slip. Paced by a deadpan soundtrack, *Summer Blend 2000*, is both banal and intriguing. The viewer is witness to a work where the participants rub cream into their skin as the camera slowly pans down their bodies. The video acts not unlike a two way mirror. The viewer is permitted to watch and to look

directly into the blank expressions of the subjects without having to interact or be implicated in anyway. Viewed in a darkened space, links with pornography are inevitable. But this is a seductive look also evident in lifestyle magazines, fashion photography and product ads on television. This slick orchestration denies any reference to the hand of the maker causing Rosetzky to become conspicuous by his absence. The viewer is made complicit in the experience of engaging with this work, at once seduced by its restrained glamour and critically aware of the influence of surface appearance'.⁹ Rosetzky sets up a strange tug-of-war between his subjects lack of outward emotion and the physical nature of their performances.

Placed on the high rotation play-lists of radio stations, nightclubs, cafes and shops; catchy tunes, beats and lyrics are hard to avoid in day to day living. Alex Lloyd's *Lucky Star* is one such song. The refined audio and visual production in the video accompanies Lloyd singing lyrics such as, *I want you to know there's someone, I'll be there for you*. The pop song format allows things that are normally voiced or thought of in private to enter a multitude of public realms. Somehow the addition of instrumentation and a pop star personae give words a legitimacy; words which otherwise would be dismissed as soppy when delivered in a public context. Lloyd can be seen to parody the idea of what a pop star is while also being one. This duality becomes less problematic when set

⁹ Charlotte Day, *Fictions, Photofile* (Australian Centre for Photography April 2000), p33. Extract from an interview with Peter Hill. In reference to David Rosetzky's practice.

alongside Douglas Gordon's view that 'the way life is heading... is an absolutely schizophrenic experience. But schizophrenia isn't necessarily always one body battling with all the different personalities... it is a kind of cohabitation of one body'.¹⁰ The music video is a valid form of short film. The integration of the pop song and music video format into contemporary visual art can conceivably be seen to coincide with this acknowledgment.

Everyday experiences are both subject and platform for the artists in *Heart On Your Sleeve*. Simple, understated things such as sitting alone in a laundromat (Alex Lloyd) or lying in bed with your girlfriend (David Michael Clarke) are transformed for and by their placement in a public context. The displacement often serves to foster uncertainties about how much of what we see in front of us has been manipulated, modified, tampered with; and why.

Process is candid in Chris Chapman's untitled drawings of boys pissing. Sourced from gay 'water-sports' magazines they are reproduced on tracing paper with ink, hand coloured, framed and placed on a gallery wall. Somewhat reminiscent of fifties 'boys own adventure' illustrations in style, the taboo nature of the act is modified by a change of context while for Chapman the physical execution relates to 'a certain delicacy and lightness akin to the activity itself'.¹¹

¹⁰ Douglas Gordon, *Cream* (Phaidon 1998) p148. Excerpt from an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist.

¹¹ Chris Chapman An excerpt from the artists statement. Sourced from *Piss Art*, a slide lecture first presented at the University of South Australia, Adelaide, September 1997, www.ensembleva.com.au/array/chap_00.html

This exhibition has sought to focus on intimate experiences and their re-presentation in a public context. Out of the intermingling of fact with fiction, and the personal with the social, forms have emerged within current art practice which actively encourage varied and contradictory readings simultaneously. The reason for this is perhaps best summed up in an interview Douglas Gordon gave - 'I think the difference between our generation and previous generations is that it isn't just a flow of images and information that we have to deal with - it's a deluge. The way this interview is going is absolutely indicative of this - there are so many things happening. Since we came into this flat, where we are having a conversation in real time, we are remembering what happened five minutes ago, we are anticipating the next question, we can hear the road works outside, the TV is on, the telephone is ringing, there is music playing. This is absolutely not the way someone like Broodthaers lived and certainly not Duchamp.'¹² These concerns, expressed by Douglas Gordon, sit alongside those of artists in *Heart On Your Sleeve*.

Kylie Johnson
2000

¹² Douglas Gordon, *Cream* (Phaidon 1998) p 148. Excerpt from an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist.

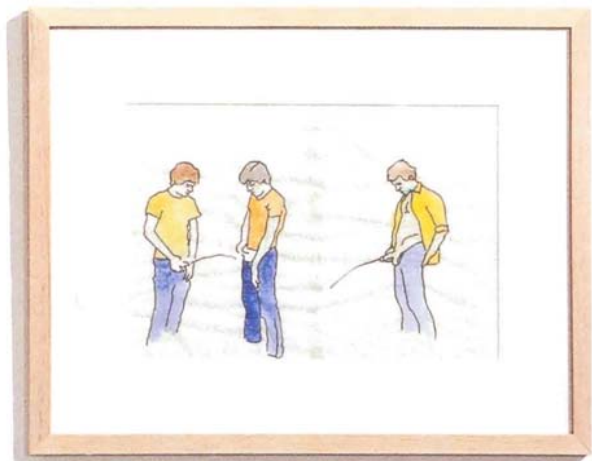
Chris Chapman



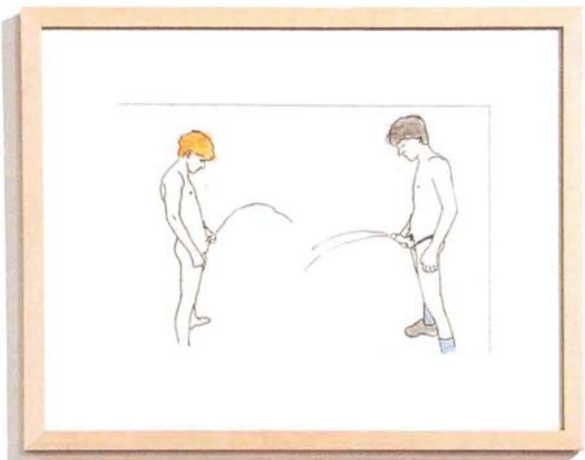
Chris Chapman lives in Adelaide where he is currently the Director of the Experimental Art Foundation.

Chris Chapman has worked at the National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of South Australia where he curated the 1996 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art. He writes regularly on contemporary art and culture for catalogues and magazines and has also exhibited his work in numerous group exhibitions including *Wunderkinder*, Top Floor, Adelaide 1999, *Fifty Bucks*, Gallery 19, Sydney 1999 and *Autopsy*, Performance Space, Sydney 1998.





Untitled
1997



Untitled
1997

Chris Chapman

List of Works

Untitled 1997

Ink on tracing paper

420 x 530 mm

Courtesy of the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide

Untitled 1997

Ink on tracing paper

420 x 530mm

Courtesy of the Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide



David Michael Clarke

David Michael Clarke was born in the United Kingdom and is currently based in France.

In 1999 David Michael Clarke commenced a Post-diplome at the Ecole Regionale des Beaux Arts de Nantes, France with the assistance of The British Council/The Hope Scott Trust. Recent exhibitions include *International Boutique*, Galeries Lafayette, Nantes, France 2000, *One Night Stand*, Klemens Gasser and Tanja Grunert Inc. New York 2000 and *Passion*, The Gasworks, London 1999. This is Clarke's Australian debut.

In Between Days
2000
Video stills



David Michael Clarke

List of Works

In Between Days 2000

Two monitor video work with sound

7 mins.

Courtesy of the artist



Julie Gough

Julie Gough lives and works in Hobart, Tasmania.

Julie Gough has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas. Most recently her work has been included in *Australian Painters Today*, Access Gallery, Curtin University, Western Australia 2000, the *Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art*, England 1999 and the *Cologne Art Fair*, Germany 1996.



and how it's been
2000
Installation detail

Julie Gough

List of Works

rail 2000

Tasmanian oak, metal, acrylic

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

how they got here 2000

Bricks, mortar, cast iron

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

and how it's been 2000

Bricks, mortar, abalone shell, photograph

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Michael Harrison





Michael Harrison lives and works
in Auckland, New Zealand.

Michael Harrison's solo exhibitions include *Beyond Us Now*, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney 2000 and Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand 1999. He has also exhibited in the group exhibition *Close Quarters: Contemporary Art from Australia & New Zealand*, Monash University Gallery and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (touring Australia and New Zealand 1998-2000).



Thoughts Laid Bare
1997 - 1998



Start All Over
1995 - 1998

Michael Harrison

List of Works

Yours and Mine 1997-98

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Courtesy of the artist and

Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Start All Over 1995-98

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Courtesy of the artist and

Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Thoughts Laid Bare 1997-98

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Courtesy of the artist and

Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Line of Descent 1997-98

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Courtesy of Australian Galleries,

Sydney and Melbourne

Knowing When to Stop 1997

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Courtesy of Australian Galleries,

Sydney and Melbourne

Annabel 1999-00

Acrylic on paper

297 x 210mm

Private collection, Sydney

Hair and Shoulder Blades 1995-1998

Acrylic on paper

295 x 211mm

Private collection, Sydney

Alex Lloyd



Alex Lloyd lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

The single *Lucky Star* from Alex Lloyd's debut solo album *Black the Sun* won the 1999 Aria Award for Best New Talent and the Triple J Listeners' Number 1 Album in 1999.

Further details are available at www.alexlloyd.com/artist.html

Details from *Black the Sun* CD booklet
1999



Alex Lloyd
List of Works

Lucky Star 1999

Music Video

4 mins.

Director - Simon Needham, The Attick

Courtesy of EMI, Australia

David Rosetzky



David Rosetzky lives and works in Melbourne, Australia.

David Rosetzky is the Founding Director of First Floor Artists and Writers Space, Melbourne. His solo exhibitions include *Society Life* at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, New Zealand 1997/98, *Custom Made* at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne 2000. He has also exhibited in numerous group exhibitions including *Rent*, Overgarden, Copenhagen and the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne 2000, the 1999 *Moet Chandon* national touring exhibition and the 1998 *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art*.

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Summer Blend 2000
Video stills



David Rosetzky

List of Works

Summer Blend 2000 2000

Video with sound

20 mins.

Courtesy of the artist

acknowledgements

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